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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 8th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. ZIARAN (Islamic Republic of Iran)
(Vice-Chairman)

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In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Ziaran (Islamic Republic of Iran), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

GENERAL DEBATE (continued)

1. Mr. ELIASHIV (Israel) said that the constructive concepts of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade provided a proper framework for the advancement of developing countries. The interdependence of various aspects of development called for a global approach which should encompass environmental protection, social and demographic problems, health and education for all, technology transfers, poverty and hunger eradication, external debt and the struggle against drug abuse. There could be no long-term solution to the problem of poverty unless environmental concerns were properly integrated into all development activities.

2. World economic disequilibrium had intensified the basic economic problems confronting many developing countries. In Africa, the critical economic situation continued to deteriorate. In 1986, Israel had submitted specific proposals on that problem in an official document to the General Assembly at its thirteenth special session, devoted to the critical economic situation in Africa.

3. To date, efforts to narrow the North-South disparity had failed, largely because of the inadequacy of funds allocated for development and the overemphasis placed on the central-modern sector in developing nations, at the expense of the rural sector, which was perpetually backward and peripheral.

4. Israel had presented organizations inside and outside the United Nations system with an outline of a plan to achieve sustainable development through promotion of the transitional economy. That proposal sought to break the vicious circle of poverty by improving the productivity and quality of life of the poorer peripheral traditional sectors. The transitional-economy strategy called for the launching of programmes comprising a limited number of projects dealing with the most acute socio-economic problems; the initial level of complexity would be compatible with the capacity of development institutions and target populations.

5. Technology was a key element of sustainable development and must be carefully selected with a view to the specific needs of each developing country. Research and development in the area of solar energy had been given priority in Israel, because solar energy was not only clean but free. The use of solar energy for industrial purposes and of biomass had been proven cost-effective. Israel had reduced the percentage of GNP spent on fuel imports from 11 per cent to 7 per cent. Such environmental technologies, which Israel was willing to share with other developing countries, could play an important role in efforts to achieve sustainable development.

(Mr. Eliashiv, Israel)

6. In its 31 years of involvement in international development efforts, Israel had cooperated with more than 90 countries and had trained more than 40,000 men and women from developing countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa, especially in agriculture and related subjects.

7. Israel desired a peace that would embrace all neighbouring countries, thereby leading to a comprehensive settlement in the region that would enable everyone there to live together in equality, trust and mutual respect.

8. Mr. KOSTARCZYK (Poland) agreed that an international consensus was emerging on a development style that emphasized individual initiative, entrepreneurship and investment within the framework of a free market and greater integration of national economies in the world economy. Institutional barriers impeding the free flow of goods and services should therefore be removed. A successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round was also needed.

9. In Poland, the process of transformation had been slower and more difficult than expected. Despite external assistance, particularly from the Paris Club, which had reduced Poland's external debt, the transition from a planned to a market economy posed enormous difficulties and required major sacrifices. Forty-five years of allocating economic and social resources without regard to market considerations had given rise to structural gaps that were both material (micro-economic and micro-social) and non-material (neglect of talent, initiative and educational accomplishment) in nature. In the area of technology, a reluctance to innovate at both the individual and group level had developed. An institutional gap had resulted from the absence of organizational infrastructure and social awareness essential to the operation of a modern market economy. In sociological terms the result had been passive individuals lacking in entrepreneurial capability, unwilling to take risks or assume responsibility.

10. Poland was determined to persevere in its efforts, and the dynamic expansion of the private sector was already apparent. At the end of 1990, the private-sector share of GDP was three times greater than in 1989. The State sector, however, which had been unwilling to reduce costs and improve its marketing methods, had reported a sharp decrease in output. The key to economic transformation lay in the radical transformation of the ownership structure, and General Assembly resolution 45/188, on entrepreneurship, was welcome in that connection.

11. In view of the close relationship between economic growth and development and a healthy environment, his delegation hoped that the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development would be a success. The United Nations should concentrate its economic and social activities in the fields where it enjoyed a comparative advantage, a consideration that should be borne in mind in efforts to revitalize and restructure United Nations activities in the economic and social spheres.

12. Mr. O'BRIEN (New Zealand) said that, although a year of momentous and tumultuous political change had passed since the forty-fifth session, in economic terms, world problems remained unsolved. It was important to preserve the global environment while at the same time stimulating economic development. An international trading system which genuinely recognized comparative advantage was crucial to the achievement of sustainable development. Sustainable development without an open trading system was inconceivable. New Zealand was deeply concerned that the risk of discriminatory trade policies had grown since the last session. The importance of bringing the Uruguay Round to a successful conclusion could not be underestimated. While many Member States shared that opinion, an effort was needed to break away from past protective practices and the economic policies that sustained them. In Central Europe, Latin America, Asia and elsewhere, Governments were attempting to free their economies from the interventionism of the past. Their economic reforms would be jeopardized, however, if a framework for trade liberalization could not be negotiated. Such reforms needed to be complemented by a liberal international economic environment including, above all, an open multilateral trading system.

13. It was not an exaggeration to assert that the world currently faced a crisis in trade comparable to the political crisis it had faced in 1990 in the Persian Gulf. The Uruguay Round did not appear on the agenda of the General Assembly, but it was in fact a critical backdrop for all the session's deliberations. A successful Uruguay Round was of vital importance in ending the current period of economic stagnation, beginning the escape from poverty, alleviating crushing debt burdens and collectively providing a sustainable economic alternative to environmental destruction.

14. There was an indisputable link between trade and environment. New Zealand shared the world's concern about environmental protection. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development would be a milestone in the cooperative endeavour to devise an effective framework for sustainable development and environmental enhancement. The preparatory process for the Conference and negotiations for a framework convention on climate change required political will if they were to be successful. The Conference process would not end in June 1992. The United Nations system must be equipped to play an ongoing role in the collective pursuit of sustainable development and environmental enhancement.

15. The United Nations could play a leading role in environmental matters through its efforts in the area of large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing. In two of its resolutions, adopted at successive sessions and endorsed by New Zealand, among others, the General Assembly had focused world attention on the plundering of the seas by certain fishing interests. Those resolutions had recommended progressive steps with a view to the cessation of those activities on an international scale. Some of those measures had already been implemented. His country welcomed in particular the total cessation of large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing operations in the South Pacific before the date stipulated by the General Assembly in its resolution 44/225.

(Mr. O'Brien, New Zealand)

However, other measures still needed to be implemented, and his delegation hoped that, at its current session, the General Assembly would reinforce its previous resolutions. In its resolution 44/211, the General Assembly had launched a review of United Nations development system. The programme of activities for the current session must be a continuation of that process. In his report on the work of the Organization, the Secretary-General, in a penetrating analysis, had commented that rising affluence and increasing poverty were a pronounced and paradoxical feature of the present world scene, which offered overwhelming evidence that poverty undermined the cohesion of societies and States, destroyed the base of human rights and damaged the health of the environment, and must therefore be addressed with the same sense of urgency as was evoked by political crises.

16. International cooperation referred to the ties that linked North and South, commodity producers and industrial producers, rural dwellers and urban dwellers, and land-locked countries and small island developing countries. Above all, it must be recognized that there was a link between development policies and the wishes of the people, who were not only beneficiaries of but also participants in the development process and whose wishes had to be given top priority in the process of targeting development assistance. That required an ongoing exchange between donors, recipients, beneficiaries and executing agencies. Poverty reduction should be the primary objective of development policy. The best means for achieving that objective were sound domestic policies, a more complete linking of foreign aid to poverty reduction, and reform of the international trading environment.

17. It was also imperative to use resources efficiently. According to the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report, there was enormous potential for restructuring national budgets and international assistance; furthermore, it was political will rather than financing that would determine whether national budgets were used for education and health or for arms, corruption or subsidies for the wealthy.

18. Mr. SEZAKI (Japan) said that the current session of the General Assembly was taking place at a time of great transition in the world's economic climate, which was moving towards greater international cooperation, peaceful resolution of regional conflicts, economic reform aimed at establishing the free-market system and promoting private initiative, and democracy, pluralism and human rights. However, some long-standing problems remained: poverty, population growth, environmental pollution, natural disasters, scarcity of financial resources, and indebtedness.

19. The world was increasingly interdependent and thus greater international cooperation was required on the basis of a clear understanding that each country was responsible for solving its own problems, including development problems, and that the role of the international community was to support self-help efforts.

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

20. The development of the developing countries continued to be of concern to the entire world. While the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe were making the transition to market economies and required international assistance, that fact should not alter the high priority granted to development cooperation. As reform continued, financial needs would increase and, given the limited amount of global savings available, it was likely to become more difficult to obtain financing for the international economy.

21. Official development assistance had played a central role in the development process, and the donor community remained committed to providing concessional financing to developing countries. However, since the international financial situation was likely to worsen, particularly where private capital and direct investment were concerned, the developing countries' financial difficulties were likely to increase. Those countries should therefore intensify their efforts to promote conditions favourable to capital inflows and the full utilization of domestic financial resources. Capital flight should also be controlled and, as the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation had pointed out, excessive military expenditures should be reduced.

22. The growth of some Asian countries, in comparison with the stagnation of many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, had demonstrated clearly that what mattered most was not the external environment but the appropriateness of a country's economic framework. For that reason, a growing number of countries in Latin America and Africa had embarked on the difficult but rewarding process of reform and structural adjustment, the results of which had thus far been very encouraging.

23. Human resource development had been recognized as the main objective and principal means of promoting development; it was currently agreed that all segments of society must participate fully in the development process.

24. His delegation felt that the debates in the Second Committee should reflect more fully the state of contemporary reality. It was time to abandon attempts to regulate the economy, as had been done during the protracted discussion on the code of conduct for transnational corporations. That debate had begun in the 1970s, when many developing countries had believed they would suffer adverse consequences as a result of those corporations' activities. Attitudes had changed, and developing countries, which were often host to such corporations, currently regarded them as essential to their development. The industrialized countries had a responsibility to sustain economic growth and to continue to make every effort to reduce domestic and external imbalances. Trade was the key element in promoting the development process and, accordingly, the need for the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round could not be overemphasized. Further alleviation of the debt burden of the developing countries must be considered in the context of the overall resource requirements for self-sustaining development.

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

25. The preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had entered a crucial phase in which there was a great deal of work to be done and during which political commitments would be necessary. With only one session of the Preparatory Committee remaining, his country joined with those delegations which had stressed the need to do everything possible to reach agreement on outstanding issues in order to make the Conference a success. His Government was particularly concerned that negotiations on a framework convention on climate change and a convention on biological diversity should be completed in time for the Conference to adopt them. Aware that developing countries needed help in integrating environment and development more effectively and in promoting sustainable development, his country intended to continue providing development assistance, with special emphasis on the environment.

26. Work on the problems of large-scale pelagic driftnet fishing should be based on scientific knowledge about marine resources and their utilization. His Government therefore supported the adoption by the General Assembly of resolutions 44/225 and 45/197. In the last two years, in accordance with those resolutions, Japan had strengthened its regulations on driftnet fishing and had cooperated with other countries in collecting and sharing scientific data. He was pleased to inform the Committee that a scientific meeting had been held in Canada in June 1991 to assess the impact of pelagic driftnet fishing on living marine resources. That meeting had reviewed the findings of an improved scientific observer programme conducted in the northern Pacific by Canada, Japan and the United States of America. His country would be holding consultations with interested Governments on effective measures for resource conservation and management.

27. As one of the countries on whose initiative the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction had been proclaimed, Japan noted with satisfaction that the Decade had helped raise the awareness of the international community as to the importance of prevention and preparedness for an effective response to natural disasters. Japan welcomed the progress achieved in the Decade activities launched in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. Japan hoped that the second meeting of the Scientific and Technical Committee held in Guatemala in September 1991 and the first meeting of the Special High-Level Council, due to be held shortly in New York, would produce results which would be in evidence throughout the course of the Decade.

28. With regard to the emergency relief operations of the United Nations system, the recent tragedies in Iraq, Bangladesh and the Horn of Africa demonstrated the need to reinforce United Nations relief in such situations. His delegation fully supported the proposals to strengthen the existing mechanism in that area, taking into account the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. Japan reminded the Committee that the Assembly, in its resolution 37/144, of 17 December 1982, had reaffirmed that the strengthening and reinforcing of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator offered the most efficient and economic means of effectively

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

coordinating the relief activities of the United Nations system in the interest of the survivors of disasters.

29. Referring to the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields, Japan said that the reform process would not achieve substantive results unless delegations addressed the issue of how to respond effectively to the duplication of work and achieve the proper complementary relationship among the different organs and bodies of the United Nations system. With regard to the General Assembly's forthcoming review of the work of the subsidiary bodies, Japan welcomed the initiatives taken by the Nordic countries and the informal dialogues that had begun, for example, on the issue of how to improve the operational activities of United Nations organizations.

30. Mr. FALL (Senegal), describing the current international economic situation, pointed out that there were two worlds and that the gap between them was widening every day; 15 per cent of the world's population consumed 70 per cent of its income, with average annual per capita incomes of under $300 in 42 least developed countries and $14,500 in the developed market economy countries. It was essential, therefore, to reform the international economic environment and to examine the close links between external debt, export earnings, terms of trade and the growth of GDP.

31. The question of debt servicing involved more than an obligation towards creditors and needed to be dealt with on the basis of the availability of financial resources. A first step towards such an approach would be to eliminate sanctions involving suspension of payments or new loans to countries in arrears. In order to be effective, debt repayment arrangements must be accompanied by fair prices on the international market for the commodities exported by the developing countries. The high interest rates of the 1980s, which had increased the burden of debt servicing while reducing the quantity of resources available for financing development and securing growth, must also be reduced.

32. A rapid and substantial increase in the volume of international funds available on a bilateral or multilateral basis, and including official development assistance, was required in order to help end the real net transfer of resources from the developing countries to the developed countries.

33. The developing countries could not be expected to devote resources to protecting the environment at a time when donors were insisting on their adopting structural adjustment programmes, reducing the level of assistance, implementing discriminatory trade policies and applying increased pressure to secure the repayment of debt. As a result of their enormous and pressing economic needs, the developing countries were felling vast areas of forests and thereby impoverishing their natural resources. Moreover, it was the industries of the developed countries which were responsible for most of the emissions that contributed to the depletion of the ozone layer and global

(Mr. Fall, Senegal)

climate warming, acid rain and 90 per cent of toxic waste produced world wide. The solution to those persistent ecological problems, accentuated in Africa's case by poverty, called for substantial resources to be committed at national and international level.

34. While the developing countries were seeking to get back on their feet, regional economic blocs were being formed and strengthened, starting with the creation of a single European market in 1992. The trend had been reinforced by the integration of the Eastern European countries in the world economy, strengthening their role in international economic relations. The combination of all those factors was increasing Africa's marginalization.

35. Senegal, aware of its responsibilities as a member of the world economic system, had embarked upon an in-depth comprehensive structural economic reform. Long-term development called for a strategy and the creation of capacities; Senegal was prepared to draw up long-term national studies and programmes and called upon the United Nations and UNDP to provide support in the form of technical assistance, initial funds and advice.

36. Mr. MENDEZ (Philippines) said that the Philippines had on previous occasions denounced external debt as an affront to human dignity. That question and the question of disasters were international priorities which the Second Committee must examine very carefully and pragmatically, in the same way as other issues on its agenda such as the eradication of poverty, the flow of financial resources to the developing countries, the link between debt, development and preservation of the environment, the satisfactory conclusion of the Uruguay Round with decisions benefiting all countries, technical cooperation among developing countries with the moral and financial support of the developed countries and operational activities for development.

37. The Philippines reaffirmed its commitment to the measures adopted by the General Assembly at its eighteenth special session and to the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries (resolution S-18/3), to the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, and to the Declaration adopted by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 at their meeting in 1991. It also endorsed the statement made by the representative of Ghana on behalf of the Group of 77 and supported the resolutions adopted by consensus concerning external debt, the environment and development, human resources development and the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields.

38. While much had been achieved in recent years with regard to the discussion and adoption of detailed and eloquent resolutions, those resolutions were of little use if they could not be applied effectively. Instead of engaging in exhaustive debates and producing copious documentation, the Second Committee should seek to influence the direction of change, the

(Mr. Mendez, Philippines)

mechanisms of action and the effective implementation of decisions. The Philippines urged Governments to demonstrate their political will.

39. Mr. BURAVKIN (Belarus) said that the region to which his country belonged had been living under a centralized system that was guided by ideological prescriptions and that had nothing to do with the laws of economic reality. That reality itself had brought about the rejection of the system and changes had been taking place within the states throughout the whole of that great region, which were leading to the installation of a democratic system, offering a historic opportunity for achieving economic integration. To achieve such a transformation would require political will, continued improvement in international institutions and the creation of the necessary new institutions. The first steps towards integrating his country into the international community had been taken and a new philosophy was taking shape along with a broad consensus in favour of economic and social progress. The decisions taken at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly and at the 1991 sessions of the Economic and Social Council had contributed substantially to such progress. Belarus was encouraged by the support which the international community had given in those forums to initiatives from the countries of the region. The processes currently under way must lead to the creation of a world where ideologies did not hold sway and blocs did not exist. Belarus was aware that that would require great efforts, but it was counting on the understanding and support of the international community.

40. The measures being implemented were aimed at creating a market economy. The Belarus Parliament had adopted the necessary measures to strengthen the country's economic independence and it was being guided by the provisions of Belarus's declaration of full independence. That declaration covered sovereignty over the country's economic resources. The programme of economic reform included a law on competition and private ownership.

41. His country would act in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other related declarations. Although it had declared its political and economic independence, his country also wished to cooperate with all the states of the old Soviet Union. His country would comply with the economic agreements adopted prior to the current changes introduced to create sovereign States within a new economic environment and legal framework. At the recent meeting in Kazakhstan, the leaders of 12 Republics, including his own, had expressed their desire to cooperate and had endorsed the signing of a treaty on economic cooperation. His country's Parliament and Government were adopting measures to structure economic activity, and many laws had already been adopted on property rights, banks, external trade and private ownership of land.

42. The Chernobyl tragedy continued to have repercussions in his country and the programmes to eliminate its effects were draining his country's resources. It had little room in which to manoeuvre, and the harsh reality was that it would need outside help, which would be crucial for the future of

(Mr. Buravkin, Belarus)

democratic reforms. His delegation was grateful for the promises of contributions made at the conference, particularly the assistance from Ukraine and Russia. His delegation was also confident that the experience would serve as a lesson for all mankind.

43. Mr. SRINIVASAN (India) said that impoverishment and luxury were irreconcilable and that international peace and security could not be firmly anchored without development. The promising contemporary changes now under way must fulfil the promise to address the problem of underdevelopment.

44. The developing countries continued to have fundamental concerns of their own which had been reflected in the decisions of the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly devoted to international economic cooperation and in the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade. The new agendas for international cooperation now being formulated should not impose new conditions on international economic cooperation. The developing countries knew what their fundamental priorities were and did not need formulas prescribed elsewhere. The vulnerability of the developing countries had been heightened by the prevailing uncertainty - stagnating output, unstable exchange and interest rates, falling demand - and by an inhospitable international environment with inadequate financial flows, deteriorating terms of trade and problems gaining access to advanced technologies, along with protectionist trade policies.

45. The Gulf crisis had had a debilitating impact on several developing countries, including his own. Its bill for imported oil had doubled, and the crisis had adversely affected its traditional markets and the remittances of expatriate workers.

46. The most fundamental change, however, was that dictated by the increasing interdependence of nations and competition in the world economy. The developing countries must take a qualitative leap to meet the new challenges. Although his country had introduced wide-ranging reforms in its industrial, fiscal, monetary and trade policies, those measures would not result in prosperity unless its partners in development cooperated to resolve short-term problems. One of the major constraints on development was the external debt of the developing countries, which ranged between $1.3-1.4 trillion. Debt service payments posed a serious threat to their economic viability. The problem could be solved only by a comprehensive and integrated solution encompassing all types of debt and all types of countries. Debt reduction agreements should be extended to all countries, including those struggling to honour their obligations.

47. An increase in official, multilateral and private resource flows was vital for developing countries. The developed world should strive to reach the target of devoting 0.7 per cent of GNP to development assistance, to enable the developing countries to play a meaningful role in the global economy. Resource flows to the developing countries from private sources and from the Bretton Woods institutions also must be encouraged.

(Mr. Srinivasan, India)

48. Trade was an important engine for development and his country believed in multilateralism. The outcome of the Uruguay Round must be balanced and must reflect the developmental priorities of developing countries as much as their partnership with the developed world in the process of global growth. His delegation was particularly concerned about the barriers to technology transfers that were being created in connection with intellectual property and certain technologies of a "sensitive nature". Access to technology was an inalienable basis on which to enhance productivity. Fair and affordable terms for technology transfers must be devised.

49. The operational activities for development of the United Nations system were of great importance to his delegation. General Assembly resolution 44/211, of 22 December 1989, must be fully implemented. His delegation would also like to see a substantial increase in resources allocated for technical assistance to meet the needs of the developing countries.

50. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to be held at Rio de Janeiro was only nine months away. The urgency of tackling environmental problems was particularly acute in developing countries, where environmental degradation went hand in hand with destitution. His delegation hoped that the outcome of the Conference, as reflected in the principles, conventions and agendas for action which might emerge, would respect the principles enshrined in General Assembly resolution 44/228 of 22 December 1989 and of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment Declaration. The integration of environment and development, the recognition of the right to development and the need for differentiated responsibilities for developed and developing countries must be incorporated in all agreements. The developed countries must accept the primary responsibility for pollution and must make additional resources and environmentally sound technologies available to the developing countries.

51. General Assembly resolution 45/264 contained a detailed agenda for reform in the economic, social and related sectors. On the basis of that agenda, during the forty-sixth session the General Assembly must examine the efficacy and efficiency of some of the subsidiary bodies of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Before discarding or changing existing structures, an effort must be made to improve them. The problems could be ascribed to the absence of political will, resources or coordination, and to the failure to focus on what could be achieved in the light of current constraints. Existing lacunae should be identified and corrected, but there was no reason to rush to condemn particular bodies for performance that had not fulfilled all expectations.

52. There was a need for better coordination of the agencies in the system which provided international humanitarian assistance to disaster-afflicted countries. Coordination efforts should not stray into sensitive areas affecting national sovereignty and the internal affairs of countries. His delegation favoured the establishment of a new relief coordination mechanism

(Mr. Srinivasan, India)

and believed that the ministerial declaration of the Group of 77 of 30 September 1991 constituted a good point of departure.

53. His delegation supported the Secretary-General's call for the reinvigoration of the North-South dialogue and his proposal to convene an international conference on development financing. While the calendar of international conferences for 1992 was very full, it would be ironic if, at a time when interdependence was the watchword, the international community failed to support a conference to deal in a global manner with the challenges of that interdependence.

54. Mr. HASSAN (Egypt) said that international economic and political relations had undergone radical changes. It was no longer possible to think in terms of a world divided into countries or regions that were indifferent to each other's fate, for the interests of peoples were intertwined and complementary. That principle of universality was shown clearly in the accelerating process of integration of the Eastern European States into the world economy. The same principle applied to the developing countries. However, the process should not result in the marginalization of any country, as that would merely replace the East-West confrontation with the aggravation of the North-South divide.

55. Great hopes had been placed in the efforts of the international community to achieve a new international economic order assuring peace, security, stability and economic development, with the full participation of all and for the benefit of all. The States of the world must therefore be guided by the dictates of justice, realism, dialogue, shared responsibility and full partnership, and it was necessary to restore balanced growth to the world economy and revitalize the development of the developing countries.

56. It was therefore necessary to give high priority to development issues and to correcting the distortions and imbalances that hindered the progress of the so-called third world; guarantee the participation of the developing countries in decision-making; ensure that regional or bilateral arrangements among developed countries did not jeopardize multilaterism and took account of the interests of all parties; and strengthen the role of the United Nations in the area of international economic cooperation.

57. The States Members of the United Nations should take concerted action to address the problems of Africa. The performance of the African economies during the period of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, had been far from satisfactory. While the measures that were currently being put forward with a view to stimulating the social and economic transformation of Africa might not be as broad or generous as Africa had hoped for, they should nevertheless be given a chance.

(Mr. Hassan, Egypt)

58. Africa was not alone in facing economic difficulties. Latin America and Asia were also affected by the persistence of gross imbalances and by the developed countries' imposition of protectionist measures, which should be rescinded at the end of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations.

59. Other serious obstacles should also be eliminated in order to ensure the economic recovery of the developing countries. The first was external debt, a problem that debtor countries could perhaps overcome if the international community continued to adopt the debt-relief and debt-reduction measures that it was currently taking. The other obstacle related to the restrictions imposed on the free flow of science and technology.

60. It was not acceptable that, in an increasingly integrated world economy, the greater part of mankind remained in a situation of backwardness and poverty. It was therefore essential to raise the standard of living of all human beings and, in particular, of the most vulnerable sectors of the population.

61. The eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) would provide an excellent opportunity for a dialogue on North-South economic relations.

62. His delegation would participate actively in the discussion on the strengthening of the ability of the United Nations system to respond to humanitarian emergencies.

63. Mr. GALBADRAKH (Mongolia) said that the views of his delegation were basically reflected in the statement of the representative of Ghana on behalf of the Group of 77. While the world economy was becoming increasingly more interdependent, the world had not evolved a system for dealing equitably with that increasing integration. The gap between rich and poor countries was growing, the problem of external debt had not been resolved, protectionism and other unjust conditions of trade persisted and access to advanced technology remained difficult. All those problems affected the overwhelming majority of developing countries. It was therefore important to intensify the North-South dialogue.

64. The international community should fulfil the commitments it made in the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, adopted by the General Assembly at its eighteenth special session, and the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, since those instruments were of fundamental importance for establishing truly equitable and fair economic relations.

65. The deterioration of the world ecological situation required close cooperation at the global and regional levels. Mongolia hoped that the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development would become an important landmark in the efforts of States to preserve the planet's ecosystem.

(Mr. Galbadrakh, Mongolia)

66. Special attention should be paid to small, low-income countries. Mongolia fully endorsed the initiatives on furthering bilateral negotiations on debt, cancelling debt servicing or setting up a long-term repayment schedule for the least developed countries.

67. Almost a year had passed since the newly elected Mongolian Government had launched an economic reform programme for the rapid and complete transformation of the national economy from a centralized and planned regime to a market economy. For almost 70 years, Mongolia's foreign trade had depended on one country, and its economy had been characterized by the inefficient use of State assets, slow growth and stagnation, as well as isolation from the rest of the world that was accentuated by the country's geographic isolation. In 1991, there had been an unprecedented decline in real income, volume of foreign trade and investment. Since late 1990, Mongolia had sought emergency assistance from a number of developed countries and multilateral financial institutions in order to help implement its economic reform programme. Mongolia was grateful for the valuable assistance it had received from the Governments of Japan and the United States of America and from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and UNDP.

68. Looking beyond the immediate crisis relief programme, the Government of Mongolia was taking bold measures to stabilize the economy and establish as soon as possible a framework that would serve as an incentive for healthy growth, which would result in a balanced government budget, restricted monetary growth and the liberalization of most prices, as well as domestic and foreign trade. The objective of the reform programme was to privatize most State enterprises and farms and to create a liberal economic regime.

69. Miss CAREY (Bahamas) said that the current session of the General Assembly was being held at the beginning of a new political course: changes in East-West relations, movements towards democracy, free elections and the decline of military dictatorships. In spite of those favourable trends, the horizon appeared bleak and uncertain. Major political set-backs continued to take place, new forms of violence were erupting, the effects of the Gulf War still influenced prospects for peace and development, and the external debt burden continued to produce a net flow of resources from poor countries to rich countries.

70. There was, more than ever, a need for international cooperation in the economic and social fields. In that regard, the United Nations and, in particular, the Second Committee had a crucial role to play. Debt continued to be one of the principal obstacles to the social and economic progress of developing countries. Regrettably, there had been no substantial breakthrough in the external debt crisis. Inflation had accelerated and the gap between North and South had widened. There was a need for a comprehensive and durable solution to the debt problem, a solution that would reduce all types of debt and would include preventive measures. Member States should be encouraged to take concrete steps towards market-oriented economic policies since those

(Miss Carey, Bahamas)

policies constituted the necessary foundations for economic progress and sustainable development. The Bahamas was aware of the fact that fostering growth and development remained primarily a national responsibility. The Bahamas had introduced a new investment programme designed to encourage the flow of foreign investment capital and the establishment, conduct and expansion of foreign enterprises in designated areas of the country through the granting of exemptions and fiscal incentives. That initiative would certainly be beneficial to the development of the country and was a model worthy of consideration by other countries.

71. Five years had elapsed since the initiation of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, whose objective was to end protectionism. Protectionism cost developing countries $100 billion a year in lost revenues from agricultural products.

72. The progress of developing countries and the preservation of the environment were inextricably linked, and the convening of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development was indeed timely. Her delegation believed that what was needed was not short-term cosmetic solutions but effective international cooperation in which both the developed and developing countries participated on an equal basis in order to achieve a sound environment. In that regard, the industrialized countries must recognize their responsibility to limit significantly the burden they imposed on the ecosystem.

73. Her delegation was pleased to note the progress that had been made by the Preparatory Committee for the Conference and by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the framework on climate change and biological diversity. However, some issues remained unresolved, particularly those relating to additional financial resources and the transfer of technology.

74. Her delegation was gravely concerned at the tragedies caused by natural disasters and emergency situations, and considered that a resolution to address measures for improving countries' capacity to combat such disasters was essential. In that regard, it welcomed the implementation of General Assembly resolution 42/169 of 11 December 1987 on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. The Bahamas had established a national committee to coordinate efforts to minimize the impact of natural disasters.

75. The efforts of UNDP to assist developing countries in defining their human development strategies for the 1990s were commendable, as was the emphasis on the importance of human resources development in the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade. Her delegation hoped that collective responsibility and international cooperation would be transformed into the political will necessary to achieve stability and economic development.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.